

13 April 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Laird's Transmittal Note on the Net Assessment

1. Attached is a copy of the note under which Laird sent our net assessment to Kissinger. I now see why General Pursley gulped when I asked him for a copy. Laird was born disingenuous. The points are not of great moment but in case you ever want to use the information in any way, you should be aware of the following facts:

a. Laird may have floated his general idea of our doing a net assessment in late February, but Pursley's formal request is dated 14 March and is based on Laird's remarks to me on 13 March. Laird, in short, has thrown in an extra month of time for work on this paper which actually we did not have.

b. The DOD support we received of the kind Laird is suggesting was negligible. Laird specifically asked that we do this as a unilateral exercise without any coordination with either DIA or any elements of the Joint Staff. The information we did obtain on friendly operations was produced only after I told Laird categorically that we could not do the job he had asked us to do unless we got reasonable answers to certain questions on topics which the Defense Department had heretofore been unwilling to share data with us. Most of our specific questions

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were answered, though the time constraints prevented full exploitation of these answers in preparing the work in time to meet Laird's deadline. The paper, thus, is a strictly Agency product -- on Laird's instructions -- and not a joint effort.

2. Actually, the transmittal note was about what I expected, though I am glad we have a copy.



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Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

Memorandum from Secretary Laird to Dr. Kissinger, "Net Assessment of North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese Military Forces," dated 12 April 1972